

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

Inclusion and Diversity in the Blue Economy



Prepared for: Canadian Women in
Ocean Industries Leadership (CWOIL)

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Action
is needed now

Collaboration
across Canada's ocean
sectors to build capacity

Transform
the ecosystem

Scope

Foster an **ocean-specific talent pipeline for under-represented people** across ocean sectors - especially women, as well as people who identify as Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+, racialized, and persons with disabilities, and **who otherwise lack fair access to opportunities in ocean business, academia, and innovation.**





Deliver

A comprehensive, long-term leadership plan to:

- Identify tools, resources and programs to create inclusive and accessible pathways for future women leaders
- Identify partners
- Identify available funding programs

Approach



Desk-Based Research

Comprehensive review of recent industry analysis and data from trusted sources.



Interviews / Engagement

More than 120 ++ key informants engaged

Associations, academia, entrepreneurs, ocean technology, associations, under-represented groups, specialists, governments, etc.



Analysis & Action Plan Dev't

Distinct actions and recommendations developed

Scope: Ocean Industries

- Ocean technology
- Energy
- Shipbuilding and maintenance
- Transportation
- Fisheries and aquaculture



In Scope

- Identify trends and best practices in gender diversity in ocean industry sectors.
- Identify current and predicted capability gaps.
- Provide guidance and recommend specific actions to create real change in the recruitment, retention, and development of underrepresented workers.
- Demonstrate best practices and programs in workforce development in similar or related industries.
- Be action-orientated with defined deliverables and clear paths for activation and implementation.
- Avoid duplication and promote collaboration by acknowledging successful initiatives and organizations that are active now.
- Learn from others – adapt when applicable.

Out of Scope

- Frameworks to support on-the-ground diversity, equity, and inclusion programs within each sector of Canada's ocean industries.
- Frameworks to support the on-the-ground diversity, equity, and inclusion programs to address specific intersectional issues and communities.
- Public education curriculum for k-12 system, colleges, or universities.

What We Learned From Previous Studies

- **Labour market challenges** are forcing recruitment from non-traditional populations
- **Leadership** is necessary
- **Communications** necessary about ocean industries and career opportunities
- **Data** lacking
- **Connectivity** is needed
- **Barriers** include poor behaviours and adaptive workplaces
- **Poor education** limits access and awareness
- **Best practices** show some success
- **Inequity** around compensation, access and supports
- **Perceptions** of ocean careers are unfavorable
- **Voices** of all must drive and own solutions
- **Role Models** are needed to show opportunities offered by ocean industries

Research Learnings

- Diversity is no longer a matter of regulatory compliance or ‘the right thing to do’. It’s now a growing business-performance issue. Diverse companies are more productive, innovative and perform better financially.
- With female participation rates in Canada’s ocean sectors being as low as 2% and no higher than 15%, it will likely take decades to significantly increase diversity across Canada’s ocean industries.
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives are “managed off the side of a desk” despite the need.
- A one-size homogenous approach will not work for all sectors in Canada’s ocean industries.
- A commonly accepted norm in business is, “What is monitored, is managed.” There is very limited measurable information about gender, Indigenous women, and other under-represented groups.
- When under-represented people are missing from research, policy spaces and decision-making tables, biases occur causing faulty research and potentially harmful policies and strategies and cultures that are not safe and inviting to everyone.
- Funding programs to support DEI are often strapped by low funding levels, are fragmented and disconnected, and regionally focused, which impede efforts, support and results from being impactful.
- Improving data on gender diversity across all ocean sectors is critical.

Research Learnings

- Organizations that do not prioritize diversity will find it harder to succeed as it will be more difficult to attract top talent, expand into new markets, establish a good reputation externally and internally, as well as to innovate.
- Women continue to be under-represented in all levels of management. Workplace bias continues to impede the hiring, development, and promotion of under-represented groups.
- Developing fully inclusive policies is a necessary step in creating an intersectional workplace.
- Offering workplace diversity and culture initiatives is a critical component of this ecosystem building process, including multiple levels of training for CEOs, managers and supervisors, employees and women working in these sectors.
- Toolboxes supporting diversity, with training models and online resources have been developed by a variety of organizations and sectors. Some industries have human resources councils that support DEI.
- Deliberate and intentional leadership accelerator and executive development programs will equip women with management skills to enable them to rise to leadership positions.
- For women advancing throughout their oceans industry career ladders, and beyond to positions of executive leadership, they need more than reinforced education and awareness.

What We Learned From Engagement

- Blue Economy Strategy fosters DEI
- Opportunities within Canada's Ocean Industries start with leadership and ownership
- DEI challenges must be addressed
- DEI communications must improve
- STEM programs open DEI opportunities
- Canada's aging population is reducing all workforces
- A DEI focus can relieve labour market challenges
- Meaningful Indigenous engagement is vital
- Young people are driving change

Best Practices

- **Accountability Works-** Organizations should set goals, collect data, and hold executive, managers and leaders accountable for improving diversity within an organization.
- **CEO Ownership-** Successful DEI leadership within an organization is moving from a human resources function to ownership by CEOs and top management, who are increasingly supported by expert DEI leads. Some of the world's highest ranked corporations in DEI link diversity and inclusion to the organization's mission, business strategy and performance goals. They view it as central to the company culture and a significant driver of financial value.
- **Sponsors-** Research confirms that men who play an active role sponsoring the early advancement of women in technical roles can have a profound impact on the long-term careers of women they sponsor.
- **Allies-** Allyship in the workplace is a powerful tool for diminishing and eliminating biases against marginalized groups and creating a culture of diversity and inclusion.
- **Role Models-** Role models have an amplified benefit for women due to the gender biases, institutional barriers and negative stereotypes women have long had to contend with. Research proves that female role models inspire girls to think bigger. Seeing is believing.
- **Mentors-** Mentors are a vital when trying to retain diverse talent. A mentoring and networking model would provide significant benefits to female professionals in Canada's ocean industries.



Analysis



Who is missing from the image?

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is primarily being “managed off the side of desks”
- This is a complex global issue – it will take work
- There is no homogenous solution – it will take work
- DEI requires commitment from CEO’s and leaders – it will take work
- Excellent examples of work being done ...but it’s dispersed and uncoordinated
- A stronger ecosystem is needed to intersect and connect businesses, communities, industry associations and DEI expertise
- Intersectionality must always be considered
- It’s also about **BELONGING**

Areas of Focus





Priority Action 1 – Provide Operational Resources to Implement the Action Plan



- Hire dedicated professional staff to support Task Force work and Action Plan implementation
 - Establish a national integrated funding program to support DEI in Canada's ocean industries
 - Fund national industry associations to develop comprehensive, long-term strategies to support inclusivity of all genders and under-represented people for their respective industries and member companies
 - Collect and report on data that focuses on gender in Canada's ocean industries, including a breakdown of people's intersectionality
- Ocean Technology Alliance of Canada Members
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Canada's Ocean Supercluster
- Industry Associations
- Canada's Ocean Supercluster, Ocean Allies, EcoCanada



**Champions
of Diversity**

Priority Action 2 – Identify Champions of Diversity



- Establish a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce with inclusive representation of sector leaders, and diversity experts to support the implementation of the Action Plan.
- Host an annual symposium or forum, focused on DEI in Canada’s ocean industries, which could lead to a stand-alone conference in year three
- Develop core content, presentations, and data for subsequent delivery as panelist and presenters in conferences and gatherings where ocean sectors gather
- Engage in industry advocacy relating to diversity in Canada’s Blue Economy
- Develop and deliver motivational presentations and content targeting ocean sector conferences, forums, and events relating to diversity of the blue economy

Ocean Technology Alliance of Canada
Members

Circulate among Ocean Technology Alliance
of Canada Members organizations

Taskforce

Taskforce

Taskforce



Empowering
Ocean
Enterprise

Priority Action 3 – Empower Ocean Enterprises



- Commit financial resources and grants to support DEI initiatives in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- Raise awareness about existing diversity resources through an online web portal, including labour market information.
- Offer workplace assessments to ocean enterprises
- Develop and offer ocean sectors online toolbox, training & resources (see suggestions below)
- Establish a Women in Ocean Export program: Fund trade delegates or trade cohorts to attend international trade conferences and tradeshows, including both female-owned enterprises, start-ups and ocean technology students from under-represented groups.

Industry Associations

Taskforce

Women in Resource Development Corporation

Winsett, Eco Canada, Industry Associations,
Women in Resource Development Corporation,
Center for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship,
YWCA

Ocean Technology Alliance of Canada Members,
Industry Associations



Inspiring
Careers

Priority Action 4 – Inspire Careers through Awareness and Education



- Develop an online ocean industries career portal for students and potential employees to research career opportunities, profile sectors and connect users to career databases and career fairs
- Curate, refine and circulate ocean literacy and awareness resources that promote oceans careers, raise awareness about the importance of Canada’s blue economy and our oceans
- Form a national, cross-ocean sector, intersectionality-driven advisory group to provide direction for ocean literacy programs across all ocean sectors
- Host a National Blue Economy Day Career Day – hosted by industry associations, including career fairs and high-profile special guest speakers
- Develop a series of scholarships to support accelerated executive and leader development for women and others in underrepresented groups
- Develop a series of scholarships to support entrepreneurial / business skill professional support program for advancing mid-managers

Center for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship, Canadian Network for Ocean Education

Center for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship, Canadian Network for Ocean Education

Taskforce

Ocean Technology Alliance of Canada Members

Taskforce

Taskforce



Priority Action 5 – Celebrate DEI Best Practices and Leadership



- Recognize and celebrate DEI best practices, progress, and leadership an annual national award
- Develop a Faces of Canada's Blue Economy Speaker Series
- Develop and implement a communications platform focused on storytelling: best practices of organizations driving a diversity culture; profile role models; ocean industries careers

Canada's Ocean Supercluster

Taskforce

Canada's Ocean Supercluster,
Taskforce

Operations	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Hire dedicated professional staff	X	X	X
Establish a national integrated funding program	X	X	X
Fund national industry associations to support DEI		X	X
Collect and report on data that focuses on gender in Canada's ocean industries	X	X	X
Diversity Champions			
Establish a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce	X	X	X
Host an annual conference or forum, focused on DEI	X	X	X
Engage in industry advocacy relating to diversity in Canada's Blue Economy			X
Presentations and content targeting ocean sector conferences, forums, and events			
Empowering Ocean Enterprise			
Commit financial resources for DEI among small and medium-sized enterprises	X	X	X
Raise awareness about existing diversity resources through an online web portal		X	X
Offer workplace assessments to organizations	X	X	X
Develop and offer ocean sectors online toolbox, training & resources		X	X
Establish a Women in Ocean Export program	X	X	X
Establish scholarships for CEO executive level education		X	X
Inspiring Careers			
Develop an ocean's focused career portal		X	X
Curate and offer ocean literacy and awareness resources		X	X
Form a national, cross-ocean sector, intersectionality-driven advisory group		X	
Host a National Blue Economy Day Career Day		X	X
Develop a series of scholarships to support accelerated executive and leader development for women	X	X	X
Develop a series of scholarships to support entrepreneurial / business skill professional support program for advancing mid-managers		X	X
Celebrating DEI Best Practices and Leadership			
Recognize and celebrate DEI best practices, progress, and leadership an annual national award		X	X
Develop a Diverse Faces of Canada's Blue Economy Speaker Series		X	X
Develop and implement a DEI communications platform			X

Thank you for the
opportunity to work on
this important project